**Interest Group Webquest**

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| **Part 1: Different interest groups**  **Choose one group from each of the** [**following categories**](http://sites.google.com/site/msbenevelli/ap-government/unit-4-parties-igs-elections/interest-group-webquest/interest-group-links)**: Think Tank, Business/Labor/Professional, Environmental, Public Interest.  Then answer the questions about each group.**  **Questions:**  What is the group's purpose/mission?  What are some of the major issues that concern the group? (Focus on current political/government issues, and try to be specific)  In what ways does the group try to influence the policy process and gain access to the three branches of government, or different levels of government?  How is the group funded?  What political ideology does the group seem to be most aligned with?  **Part 2: Funding and PACs**  **Directions:** In order to help you learn about the controversies of interest groups and their actions, go to the following links and answer questions so you can prepare for upcoming assessments. For much of this activity, you will be utilizing the resources of [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org/).   **I. Which Industry Supports Which Political Party?**   1. Based on the data in this chart, make a list of comparing the top 5 industries that gave the most to each of the following political parties in the 2008 election cycle. List the amount they donated to that party. *Your are encouraged to click on the different industries and read about their background.*   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Industries that Supported the [**Democrats**](http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/mems.php?party=D&cycle=2010) | Industries that Supported the [**Republicans**](http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/mems.php?party=R&cycle=2010) | |  |  |   2. Research the [Health Services/HMO (insurance) industry](http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.php?ind=H03++&goButt2.x=8&goButt2.y=10&goButt2=Submit). Read the background information about the industry.  A. Who are the [top four members of Congress](http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/summary.php?ind=H03&recipdetail=M&sortorder=U&cycle=2010) that received contributions from this industry?  B. Who are the [top three contributors](http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/contrib.php?ind=H03&cycle=2010) to federal candidates and parties (2010)?  C. What [trends](http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/indusclient.php?lname=H03&year=2010) do you observe about this industry’s spending on lobbyists?   **II. Lobbying**   3. What [trends](http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/index.php) do you observe in the number of lobbyists **and** the amount of money spent on lobbying?  4. Make a list of the [top five interest group spenders](http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/top.php?showYear=2010&indexType=s) so far in 2010—include the amount of money they have spent on lobbying so far 5. Describe the function of the interest group that has spent the most money on lobbying thus far in 2010 (you will need to use outside resources)  6. Make a list of the [top three lobbying firms](http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/top.php?showYear=2010&indexType=l) thus far in 2010 (based on money received for their services). Include how much money they have received thus far. 7. Read this [article](http://www.theonion.com/articles/american-people-hire-highpowered-lobbyist-to-push,18204/?utm_source=recentnews) that satirizes the lobbying industry and the US government      A. Summarize this article in 3 sentences or less.      B. What message is the author trying to convey?   **III. The Revolving Door:**  8. Explain the meaning of the phrase “[revolving door](http://www.opensecrets.org/revolving/index.php)”.  9. Look at the employment history of [Trent Lott](http://www.opensecrets.org/revolving/rev_summary.php?id=70566), why do you think he was hired to become a lobbyist?  10. Look at the employment history of [Tom Daschle](http://www.opensecrets.org/revolving/rev_summary.php?id=34118). How does he fit the profile of someone who has been utilized the ‘revolving door’?  11. What are the pros & cons of the “revolving door”?    **IV. Political Action Committees (PACs):**  12. Briefly explain the function of [PACs](http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/pacfaq.php) 13. Make a list of the [top five PACS in 2010](http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/toppacs.php?Type=C&cycle=2010) —include the amount of money the PAC spent.  14. What are [Leadership PACS](http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/industry.php?txt=Q03&cycle=2008)?  15. Make a list of the [top five Leadership PACS in 2010](http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/industry.php?txt=Q03&cycle=2010) —include the amount of money the PAC spent.    **V. 527 Groups:**  16. Explain the [purpose](http://projects.publicintegrity.org/527/default.aspx?act=faq) of 527 groups.  17. [Why](http://www.opensecrets.org/527s/basics.php) are these groups called ‘527s’?  18. In 2008, in what two [categories](http://www.opensecrets.org/527s/527cmtes.php?level=E&cycle=2008) did 527s spend much of their money? Hypothesize why 527s spend much of their money in these two categories.  19. Watch this political [advertisement](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsTXhhCxveg). How can you tell this ad was created and paid for by a 527 organization?   20. Watch this [video clip](http://vsx.onstreammedia.com/vsx/newshour/search/NHPlayer?assetId=83133&ccstart=0&pt=0), followed by [this clip](http://vsx.onstreammedia.com/vsx/newshour/search/NHPlayer?assetId=83134&ccstart=0&pt=0)   Go [here](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/video/search_results.html?q=crashing+the+party&submit=Search) and in the search tab - click "2000-2007" and search "527s".  The segments are titled "Crashing the Parties: Background" and "Crashing the Parties: Discussion" A. How did the ‘McCain-Feinfold Law’ help increase the spending on 527s?  B. What types of ‘things’ can 527s say/advocate?   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | |